

Bachelor's thesis

Degree program: Music

2013

Cécile THEVENOT

# A. SAANKO LUVAN? +SOUND AND VISUAL PERFORMAN CE (APPENDIX 1.)

## B. MUSIC PERFORMANCE AS A WHOLE: VISUAL AND SO UND Canons and diversions



Degree programme: Music

Completion of the thesis | Total number of pages: 28

Instructors: Soili Lehtinen, Vesä Kankaanpää

Cécile THEVENOT

# MUSIC PERFORMANCE AS A WHOLE: VISUAL AND SOUND

## CANONS AND DIVERSIONS

When music is performed, in any case, it's part of a representation. That is the main question exposed in this written work. How to understand a concert as a whole including its visual and sound sides whether it's thought as part of a creation or pretend to not exist.

The first part introduces how the music is directed and represented in traditional classical concert spaces. This thesis attempts to approach in a wider way a common classical concert event. Why not to present the whole ceremony as a performance including its visual and sound components, spectators and performers both acting. The aim is to underline the specific canons of representations developed in that world. A strict classification between different functions, spectators, interprets; conductors and composers have been settling down. Corollary different worlds have been created and stay separated. Moreover I try to question why the music valued and played during that kind of events comes only from dead composers.

Secondly, through the figure of Mauricio Kagel I point out a composer who interrogates during all his life those conventions. He doesn't follow common classifications and allows himself to cross the borders between arts and disciplines. Composer but also theatre director, film-maker, his work is rich and diversified. The genre of *Instrumental Theatre* will be a space to experiment for the composer his views. Kagel wish to think the totality of the spectacle combining sound and visual elements. He tries to re-find the holistic experience of music. Further I analyse one singular work of the artist: *Ludwig Van* (a double piece, film and scenic work) to highlight Kagel's interest in German musical tradition.

## KEYWORDS:

Music and theatre 20th century, visual and sounds, representation, conventions, Mauricio Kagel, instrumental theatre

## CONTENT

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. A TRADITIONAL CLASSICAL CONCERT AS A WHOLE .....</b>	<b>6</b>
1. OPEN EYES .....	6
1.1. <i>Specific Spaces: A place for listening</i> .....	7
1.2. <i>Spectators and performers: actors</i> .....	8
2. SPECIALIZATION AND SEPARATE WORLDS .....	9
2.1. <i>Audiences and performers</i> .....	9
2.2. <i>The modern musician profession; amateurs and professionals</i> .....	10
2.3. <i>Composers, interprets and conductors</i> .....	11
3. AUTHENTICITY MOVEMENT .....	11
3.1. <i>Dead Composers</i> .....	12
3.2. <i>Myth</i> .....	12
3.3. <i>Tensions and strict accuracy</i> .....	13
<b>II. MAURICIO KAGEL: A SINGULAR APPROACH .....</b>	<b>15</b>
1. HETEROGENEOUS WORK .....	15
1.1. <i>Short presentation of his life</i> .....	15
1.2. <i>His work : diversified forms and materials</i> .....	16
1.3. <i>Common thread</i> .....	16
2. "INSTRUMENTAL THEATRE" : MUSIC WITH ALL SENSES.....	17
2. 1. <i>Definition instrumental theatre</i> .....	18
2.2. <i>Music-making is itself a theatrical action</i> .....	19
3. DECONSTRUCTION OF THE "GREAT TRADITION" .....	20
3.1. <i>Kagel and the German tradition</i> .....	20
3.2. <i>Ludwig van: Ein Bericht (Ludwig Van: a report) 1969-1970.</i> .....	21
3.3. <i>Ludwig Van.(1969-1970) Homage by Beethoven: a scenic work</i> .....	23
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>SOURCES .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1.....</b>	<b>28</b>

## INTRODUCTION

In the Western classical music domain the representation of music on the stage and the presence of musicians and their behaviour are directed by strict rules. In parallel the question of the performance as a whole including its visual side is mostly avoid. The aim is to place the music as the centre, music as a purely acoustic phenomenon. That is an abstraction music falls, all the time, within specific occasions which do exist and are represented.

I will attempt to interrogate, in this written work, the representations of music, how the music is directed on the stage, visually mostly, and according which conventions. And besides what are the meanings behind the canons present in traditional classical concerts?

The first part will point out the canons of representation, representation which pretend to not be visible and which is not exposed as an artistic creation. How the space is organized and what are the behaviours of the performers and audiences during a classical concert, all are acting and actors of the event. Further how the different functions are classified and move into specific and separate worlds. The last section will be the creation nowadays of a mythological past and the relationships that have been developed with those mythological heroes, dead composer s.

In the Twentieth Century many composers are aspiring to re-invent the traditional ritual of concert. They transformed the spaces, the ways of playing instruments or/and re-thought the place of musician on the stage. Most of them created new codes while claiming innovations.

I think Mauricio Kagel apart from this tendency. He incarnates fully the subject of this thesis. The composer questions the conventions of representations in the

classical music tradition and thought also the performance as a whole combining visual and sound elements on one level.

Kagel himself as a composer, film-maker and theatre director rejects any kind of classification, his artistic work presents diversified forms and materials. He claims a form of freedom, plays with the genres and cross the borders between disciplines.

Through his work and life the second part will expose a composer who took the responsibility of directing his works on the stage. He thought the totality of the spectacle within his dimensions of time and space. He also wonders about a kind of sclerosis developed in classical music in relation with the past, in that direction he built the series on German Tradition. Presenting his work Ludwig Van (a film and a scenic work) I will try to highlight his thinking and artistic approach related to the tradition.

## I. A TRADITIONAL CLASSICAL CONCERT AS A WHOLE

This first chapter tries to apprehend a traditional classical concert in its totality, the spaces and not only the stage, the actors of the event, performers but also audiences and the composers who are summoned. The entire event could be thought as a show. While observing with open eyes these modern ceremonies some canons of representations emerge. Combining my own experiences and Christopher Small's thinking I present these conventions and attempt to underline their meanings.

### 1. Open eyes

The modern Western tradition of music manifests itself in the practice of listening to music with closed eyes. Behind, there is the idea according to which even the music-making is an outside distraction from the own nature of music. The figure of the uncle in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* illustrates clearly this phenomenon:

*Music, particularly song, was a pleasure he could not live without; and it was one of his peculiarities that he wished the singer not to be in view. In this respect' he would say, 'they spoil us the theatre; the music there is, as it were, subservient to the eye; it accompanies movements, not emotions. In oratorios and concerts, the form of the musician constantly disturbs us; true music is intended for the ear alone... Whoever sings must be invisible, his form must not confuse me, or corrupt my judgement'... On the same principles, in respect of instrumental music, he required that the orchestra should as much as possible be hid; because by the mechanical exertions, by the mean and awkward gestures of the performers, our feelings are so much dispersed and perplexed. Accordingly, he always used to shut his eyes while hearing music; thereby to concentrate his whole being on the single pure enjoyment of the ear."* (J.W. Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* trans. T. Carlyle 1962 p.486)

As Björn Heile writes in one of his article, "this concept- of music as a purely acoustic phenomenon- is of course an abstraction: music is always produced and listened to in specific circumstances and these circumstances not only shape the experience of the music, but form an intrinsic part of its creation and structure." (B. Heile 2006 p. 184)

### **1.1. Specific Spaces: A place for listening**

Since the nineteenth century the Western society started to build specialized and specific buildings (Concert Hall or auditorium) to receive concert of classical music. Ch. Small describes very carefully and precisely the design of those spaces. The main feature pointed out in each Concert Halls is an impression of opulence; the goals of architects were to create an elegant and rich atmosphere.

The author even presents those buildings as sacred spaces separated from the outside world in order to give the idea that something serious is going to happen, an event which doesn't belong to our everyday life.

In all of them there are two separate areas: the foyer and the inner space where the music will be held. According to Christopher Small the foyer is a time and space for socializing, and to see and to be seen while the auditorium is a place for hearing. "The word itself (auditorium) tells us that hearing is the primary activity that takes place in it, and here indeed it is assumed that performing takes place only in order to make hearing possible." (Ch. Small 1998 p.26)

All those settings tell to audiences and more to society that, firstly the classical music world concerns another reality apart from "normal" life, secondly that the work of music is the centre of the event excluding its visual side and the action of performing. In one way, the purpose is to create the illusion of a magical world where nobody took the responsibility of directing the ceremony.

## **1.2. Spectators and performers: actors**

### **° Audiences**

While participating to a concert evening or any kind of social gathering we all are actors and adopt a role (consciously or mostly unconsciously).

G. Bateson (anthropologist) has developed the idea "that creatures shape their environment as much as they are shaped by it." (C. Small 1998 p. 50)

Following his thought I could say that the atmosphere of those spaces (concert hall or auditoriums) influences audiences' behaviour with its impressive and dramatic settings. The audience is invited to be respectful and silent; indeed that is a serious matter. They should follow the canons of middle-class good manners. We don't expect any interactions between the performers and the members of the audience except clapping at the end of the show. The audience is silent and passive and is here to listen only. The auditorium's design not only discourages communication among members of the audience but also tells them that they are there to listen and not to talk back (Ch. Small 1998 p.27)

At the same time audience is one part of the event and shapes its atmosphere; audience is actor of the ceremony as much as the performers. The ceremony invite people to behave in a certain way according to specific conventions, in parallel audiences accept and perpetuate those canons.

### **° Stage and performers**

After observing the buildings, spaces, its organization and its actors I will focus the attention now on the stage itself and its conventions of representation.

Musicians as costumes are all wearing black and formal dress, Ch. Small talks about "uniforms". There is a double meaning behind this common rule. Musicians are, first proclaiming their social equality with members of the audience. At the same time, and it's ambiguous, it's suggesting that musicians



are continuing status services for upper-classes. %t locates the musicians in a social between-stairs, on the one hand proclaiming their social equality with members of the audience and on the other suggesting their continuing status as providers of services for the upper-classes+ (Ch. Small 1998 p. 66) It could tell also how performers serves to the music, they are passing and the music stays.

They move on the stage with stylized behaviour, they will be only responsible for their instrument and part of the work of music. They won't talk on the stage or communicate directly with the audience. Musicians are actors of the performance that is a fact but Western tradition wish they could disappear for the music, their bodies, voices and movements are not include within the performance.

## **2. Specialization and separate worlds**

At the present time in all the society emerge a strong specialization in the professions, in different areas and disciplines. We need to strictly classify, and crossing the borders between genres isn't easily permitted.

In the music world we notice the same directions, the roles are more and more specialized, and commonly musicians shouldn't develop multiple professions.

### **2.1. Audiences and performers**

In our cultural tradition (Western) the audience is separate from performers; this separation exists also during sport, theatre events for example and of course during classical concerts.

The buildings are designed in that way, that's why there are specific entrances for artists and audiences. Performers and spectator are not mixed. There is only one-way communication: from composer to listener through the medium of the performers. %they (musicians) seem [õ ] to inhabit a separate world from the audience, which watches them as from distance and will in a few minutes listen to them as if through a visually and acoustically transparent but socially opaque

screen at the edge of the platform+ (Ch. Small 1998 p.64). This custom is a desire to protect the "mysterious" power of the performers.

This mode of representation (one way communication) is taken for granted and is specific to Western culture nowadays but it has not been all the time in this way.

During the eighteenth century in the London society, for example, the attitudes around music were extremely different. When people gathered in order to admire pieces from Handel or A W. Mozart they didn't sit in silence as audiences today, they were coming and going, talking, walking and listening. It was a time for socializing and enjoying the music and those two activities were not contradictory.

## **2.2. The modern musician profession; amateurs and professionals**

This separation between performers and audiences is corollary to the idea that music is only for listening. People gather for hearing, they are not invited to participate and interact with the musicians and music stays in the professional sphere. It's not anymore possible to open the border.

Amateurs may perform at home or in certain limited fields but in the public domain professionals dominate. That is quite new fact it developed during the first half of the nineteenth century. Until that time in orchestras for example amateurs and professionals were playing together, most of the pianists whom Mozart wrote his concertos were amateurs. The situation has changed %with the coming of the travelling virtuoso-entrepreneur+ (Ch. Small 1998 p.72) as Liszt or Paganini. A profound transformation of behaviours around music took place at that moment. In the past musical works were made for playing now they are for listening that's why we need to employ professionals for composing and playing.

### **2.3. Composers, interprets and conductors**

Those changes brought a specialization in the musical field itself. The profession of composer is today the authority of music. Musicians in Western classical music world are only interprets, they should follow precisely the instructions written by the composer.

Another particular fact unique to Western concert is the figure of conductor, a musician who makes no sound himself and who directs the performance of a group from outside. The role seems to have come into existence around the time of the Renaissance. At the time of the Council of Trent there was no separate *profession* of conductor; conducting was only one of the duties of a musician, along with composing, playing instruments and singing, tuning the harpsichord and organ, organizing performances, and teaching the skills of composition and performance+ (Ch. Small 1998 p.82). Up to the time of Beethoven composer and conductor was generally the same person. The modern professional conductor, who is only directing the orchestra, is a nineteenth century creation.

In Mozambique and Bali for instance the approach of music is deeply different, composing, rehearsing, and performing are a single process. Piece, performance, composer and performers are a single group. The musical universe is a unified whole.

### **3. Authenticity movement**

Quite recently in the classical music society has grown a desire for preservation or in other words a particular taste for authenticity. The works from the past represent an ideal of perfection and as such they need respect and accuracy. It seems that interprets aren't allow or don't allow themselves to %play+ with these pieces, to transform them or to combine freely their own musical personalities with dead composers' one. The chapter below exposes how and why this authenticity movement takes place and which kind of attitudes does it bring.

### 3.1. Dead Composers

All of the musicians whose works are being played during classical concerts are dead. There are not so many of them, maybe around fifty composers, all are related to the period which start around 1678 with the birth of Vivaldi (Bach and Haendel were born in 1685) and ended with the death of Debussy in 1918.

In fact, for most concert-goers [5] the Great Composers fall into an even narrower chronological range, for which cynical managements use the shorthand term 'Mozart-to-Mahler' (Ch. Small 1998 p.88). It's a period of only 150 years.

Composers who live, work and create in the present time stay invisible in this area, they belong to another sphere named contemporary or experimental music domain which doesn't touch wide audiences, sphere which seem mostly inaccessible to the majority. Surprising fact, the whole Western musical culture is based on musical works coming from the past.

In other cultures that wouldn't be imaginable, the philosophy of art is entirely reverse. The action of art (or in this case music) is more valued than the object of art itself.

The last chapter of this thesis, for example, mentioned the different approaches developed in Mozambique and Bali. How the event is thought as a whole without trying to classify the creation and interpretation, composer and musicians, audiences and performers. In that sense the music performance fit into the present time.

### 3.2. Myth

Ch. Small exposes in his book *Musicking* that in reality "Great Composers" (as we commonly call them) are mythological heroes. These figures (composers from the past) belong not to secular history at all, not to calendar time, but to

myth, to the past that exists in our minds outside of historical time+ (Ch. Small 1998 p.89)

We claim a form of authenticity in relation to the past and its music. Nowadays music movements looking for a perfect accuracy and advocating a total fidelity to the past in their interpretations and performances are growing. Musicologists seek out the most authentic text of a work bring irresistibly to mind Talmudic, biblical or Koranic scholars with their obsession for documentation+ (Ch. Small 1998 p.90).

Those mythological heroes have been constructed to serve the needs of present day people, to provide them with models for values and behaviour. That is the function of all myths. The classical music sphere is created and aimed for upper-classes people. At the moment, in a society where changes are more and more fast, dominant classes need images of stability, the reassurance that things will stay as they are.

Ch. Small goes even further and presents the composer as a prophet, the score as a sacred text and the conductor as a priest, the entire ceremony happening in sacred spaces (Concert Halls).

After these observations and reflections, I could tell how living composers stay apart from those circles not yet immortal. Western Society, especially people creating and perpetuating the tradition of classical music, cannot present them (alive composers) according to their desires and needs. Composers working in the present are uncontrollable, as the life in perpetual transformation, and they thwart those needs of stability and constancy.

### **3.3. Tensions and strict accuracy**

This mythological past generates a particular relation to the written musical works and consequently to the performance. Only the score has a continuous real existence the rest is memory. In parallel, the modern philosophy of art value the art object itself therefore the action of art isn't thought as a centre.

Music from the past, actually the images that we (Western society) built, appears as an ideal of perfection and harmony. The score as a sacred text should be scrupulously followed and institutions are insisting anxiously on fidelity to the composer's written text. That quite recent phenomenon leads to tensions and frustrations according to me. As a musician or as a spectator the piece of music will bring you anyway dissatisfactions. Indeed there is the belief that for each piece exist somewhere a corresponding Platonic entity that exists prior to+ (Ch. Small p.113), so all possible performances will be only an approximation. I believe that is the pursuing of an impossible ideal, it takes away people from reality, present and themselves.

## **II. MAURICIO KAGEL: A SINGULAR APPROACH**

The composer evolves between tradition and modernity. Mauricio Kagel builds a personal thinking rooted in the past; simultaneously he questions the current uses of music from that other time. The chapter below demonstrates how the composer gave a shape to his thoughts within his artistic work and life. His person with his singular approach, in one way, represents and incarnates the subject of this written work.

### **1. Heterogeneous work**

Presenting and analysing Kagel's artistic path allow me to point out an artist who claims the variety of forms and materials. According to me, it seems to advocate a liberty against classification and specialization, strong tendencies observed at the present time. (As it is developed in part I.2.) In fact this diversity is part of a common thread; Kagel puts on the first level the sense, the form comes after in function of the meanings. This first section attempts to take an interest in those questions.

#### **1.1. Short presentation of his life**

Mauricio Kagel (1931-2008) is a German-Argentine composer. He studies in the University of Buenos Aires music, history, literature and philosophy. He becomes at the age of 18 years old "artistic guide" in the Agrupacion Nueva Musica. He is one of the founders of the Argentine cinematheque, cinema and photography critic. To my mind, already as a young man, while studying, Mauricio Kagel establishes connections freely between different disciplines and arts and demonstrates an amazing spirit of openness.

In 1957 he settles down in Cologne, Germany, where two years later, he creates the Kölner Ensemble für Neue Musik and between 1969 and 1975 he

guides the New Music department. Since 1974 he directs the chair of Musical Theatre in the Hochschule für Musik.

### **1.2. His work: diversified forms and materials**

There is one word which could define Kagel's *oeuvre*: *eclecticism*.

His work is large and diversified and it doesn't agree with Western common classification as I see it. He wrote compositions for orchestra, voices, piano and orchestra, numerous scenic works, films and radio-phonetic pieces.

Kagel has experimented all the possible configurations: the conference with *Sur Scène* (1959-60), the alienation and the link between the musician and his instrument *Sonant* (1960) *Metapiece* (1961), the theatre representation with *Probe* (1971) and *Journal de Théâtre* (1965-1967), the scenic setups, the light and the video projections with *Prima Vista* (1964) and *Camera Oscura* (1965), the visual pieces and the pantomime with *Match* (1965) for example, pieces with dramaturgy and text like *Mare Nostrum* (1973-1975), the Oratorio with *La Passion selon Saint Bach* (1981-1985) and movies with the famous *Ludwig Van*.

### **1.3. Common thread**

At first, it seems difficult to catch the main directions in Kagel's work whether we try to analyse his pieces with conventional ways of thinking. In the Western modern society does exist a tendency and a kind of need for strict classification

Kagel protests against this movement through his pieces and life. He tells himself : «Peut être ne faudrait-il pas parler des étapes ou périodes dans la composition de mes œuvres théâtrales : chaque pièce me pose un nouveau problème ; elle est un anneau à l'intérieur d'une chaîne ; aucune œuvre n'essaie d'améliorer la précédente. Je crois surtout à la continuité de la pensée » (Mauricio Kagel, Tam-Tam Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1983, p. 128.)



If I translate and summarize the main lines, Kagel defines his *oeuvre* as a continuous renewal of the forms within a constant compositional reflection.

What are those constants underlined in his approach? Several ideas exist in the whole Kagel's art according to J. F. Trubert (Ircam sources <http://brahms.ircam.fr/mauricio-kagel>).

In the first instance, during all his life Kagel questions the canons and conventions especially developed in classical music world. In *Match for three players* (1964) two cellists compete under the direction of a percussionist referee in a musical game of tennis. Kagel plays with the canons of classical music and the relationships that exist in this world. Another example is his film *Solo* (1967) : a conductor performs in silence in front of lifeless instruments without their players.

Second idea linked and usually combined with the first one is the presence of humour and derision in Kagel's style. It's a way for him to depict and criticize the society and its absurdity.

And third, he expands the idea of musical composition while using and combining extra-musical elements : gestures, sounds, light, figures etc.. Since 1960, he claims the genre of "instrumental theatre", a space where he experiments and composes the stage as a whole.

## **2. "Instrumental theatre" : Music with all senses**

The following part gets into the heart of the matter. The first chapter exposed how the music is commonly represented on the stage trying to avoid its inherent visual components. Kagel interrogating those canons seeks to a global process. Not as part of the operatic tradition he creates the genre of "instrumental theatre" to experiment his views.

## **2. 1. Definition instrumental theatre**

Since 1960 the composer claims the genre of "instrumental theatre", this term was coined by Kagel himself. It's an approach of the totality of the spectacle in its acoustic and visual components within the dimensions of time and space+ (Björn Heile 2006 p. 183). Indeed conventional approaches to opera and music theatre are based on concepts of synthesis; music is "added" to words or "accompanies" scenic actions. Björn Heile in his article about the composer express how Kagel's instrumental theatre tends to re-find the holistic experience of music characteristic of pre-modern practices. As such it represents a reconstruction of a lost unity.

M. Kagel tells: "music has also been a scenic event for a long time. In the nineteenth century people still enjoyed music also with their eyes, with all their senses. Only with the increasing dominance of the mechanical reproduction of music, through broadcasting and records, was this reduced to the purely acoustic dimension. What I want is to bring the audience back to an enjoyment of music with all senses. That's why my music is a direct, exaggerated protest against the mechanical reproduction of music. My goal: a re-humanization of music-making » (Björn Heile, 2006 p.186)

Common rules are transformed and Kagel attempts to create another set-up of relationships in the theatre space. Musical genre, forms, interprets; instruments are deformed and re-organized according to an aesthetic influenced by John Cage, Schnebel, La Monte Young and G.Hoffnung. I believe those artistic works give the opportunity to audiences who are participating to those events and even to performers who collaborate with the composer to re-think the traditional modes of representation especially within music performances. Even more Kagel brings around people to interrogate their own behaviours and attitudes inside cultural spaces and further in their every day life.

## 2.2. Music-making is itself a theatrical action

The first part of this dissertation tried to demonstrate how the music-actions, that is to say the musicians' presence on the stage while they are playing are not included in the traditional concert frame. The figure of the uncle in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* expressed particularly this fact. (Part I. 1.) Music-making disturbs audiences and musicians' bodies are bothering the essence of music. Kagel plays, often with humour and derision, on this contradiction.

¶n Kagel's instrumental theatre [...] the sound-*producing* action and the sound *produced* are fused into one integral audiovisual event [ö ] On one side instrumental playing is understood as kinetic action so that music is « theatricalised » as it were, and on the other the performance of music is presented within a theatrical frame, in which case theatre is 'musicalised'+ (B. Heile 2006 p.187).

Two pieces from 1960-1961 (*Sonant* and *Sur scène*) present the two opposed approaches of the instrumental theatre. For instance, in the chamber music piece: *Sonant* (1961) for guitar, harp, double bass and drums, the music comes from Kagel's analysis about different modes and techniques of playing instruments. The various actions are selected for their visual effects as much as for their sound results. In that sense the visual and sound components of the performance are thought on one level and merged. The piece presents tensions between disproportionate actions and minimum sounds and vice versa. ¶n this way, the physicality and kinesics of music-making are no longer the collateral damage on the live concert, but an integral part of the spectacle+. (B. Heile, 2006 p. 187) *Sonant* builds a ¶satirical mirror image of an ordinary concert+ (B. Heile, 2006 p. 187)

### 3. Deconstruction of the "Great Tradition"

Kagel does not reject the music wrote by dead composers on the contrary he respects the tradition. His Oeuvre is rooted in the past and wish to be part of this line. However his work wonders how the modernity uses that music and its image creating a mythological past. (one section in the first part of this written work is consecrated to this specific point, part I 3.) The next chapter draws attention to Kagel's interest in German tradition, the aim is to underline his visions about the Western Society nowadays in relation to the music from the past.

#### 3.1. Kagel and the German tradition

Kagel questions the Western musical tradition. Indeed, Machaut, Ravel, Debussy, Stravinski (and many others composers) cross some of his pieces. During the 1970's Kagel directs particularly his work towards the deconstruction of the Romantic German tradition.

He starts his German series with the film *Ludwig Van* (1969-70), since J.S Bach (*Die Mutation, Recitativarie, Chorbuch, Saint-Bach-Passion*) until Beethoven (*Ludwig van, 10 Marches pour rater la victoire*), Schubert (*Aus Deutschland*), Schumann (*Aus Deutschland, Mitternachtsstück*), Mendelssohn (*Ein Brief*), Liszt (*Unguis incarnatus est*), Brahms (*Variationen ohne Fuge*), and even Haydn (*Die Erschöpfung der Welt*) and Mozart (*Pan*).

M. L. Martin while presenting an event around Kagel and the Romanticism for *La Cité de la Musique* in Paris tells how Kagel abandons the deference, mannered gestures and the excessive use of quotations in music. The reference from the past attempts to present the material in another point of view, a material which reveal our modernity. (*Kagel et le Romantisme, 2005* <http://mediatheque.citedelamusique.fr>). One singular direction appears already now in Kagel's thinking, he wish to reveal the modernity of the pieces from the past and to re-invent our (Western society) relationships to that time leaving mythological heroes.

### 3.2. Ludwig van: Ein Bericht (Ludwig Van: a report) 1969-1970.

#### ° Context and presentation

1970 is the year of the bicentennial of Beethoven's anniversary. %It gave birth for that celebrations to 'stylistically' adventurous works+ (E.Schwartz and D. Godfrey. 1993p. 244). For example, Stockhausen wrote *Opus 1970* also known as *Stockhausen-Beethausen*. Kagel on that occasion, between 1969 and 1970 created his film: *Ludwig Van: Ein Bericht* which was commissioned by Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln.

The first part depicts Beethoven coming back in Bonn (his birthplace) during the year 1970. Kagel wants to imagine %and if... %Beethoven would see Bonn today, how his house has been transformed into a museum for example. In a way, the spectator is invited inside the head of Beethoven to discover with his eyes (the camera) Bonn in that year. The second part is full of different scenes, parodies of TV programmes, analysing and commenting on Beethoven's reception.

The film *Ludwig Van* is an amazing material to illustrate Kagel's reflection on Beethoven's music uses at the present time. Actually Kagel interrogates how Beethoven's music has been used and abused. It gives at the same time a general view about his researches and criticizes not only on Beethoven but on the whole musical tradition. I find a particular interest to observe how Kagel creates his *Oeuvre* out from his perceptions. The essence of art emerges in his works including deep thoughts on the absurdities of our modernity.

#### ° Beethoven as an icon and its 'Musealisation'

Nikos Stavlas who consecrates his thesis on %Kagel and *Ludwig Van*+ explains how Kagel refers to a "musealisation" of Beethoven, in other words the fact that Beethoven- Beethoven himself, or maybe his image but not his music- is built as an icon, admired like a god but at the same time commercialized and used for profit. He was against this phenomenon; the following extract from an interview highlight his point of views.

Well look. Do you know the Song of Joy? This is prostitution. And I thought it [the Beethoven bicentenary year] would be a lot of things like that. It would be a lot of Beethoven music, all round the world and avoid this, this kind of prostitution. I said wait one year and then we will hear Beethoven again with a lot of pleasures, with fresh ears. It was simply that. It was a constructive irony. It was not trying to say he's not good enough. Exactly the opposite. Let's make a pause, and then we will see again that Beethoven is a very extraordinary composer. (Kagel, interview with Stephen Loy, 2006, N. Stavlas 2012 p.70 )

Several sequences of the film illustrate those issues, the first sections (and besides) depicted Beethoven arriving in Bonn to find out that he has become a myth. As the German composer enters the house of his childhood he discovers that it has been transformed into a museum. To my mind, in that way Kagel confronts the mythological hero built by modernity with his secular figure. Another sequence (chapter 4), presents Beethoven in front of hundred busts of himself floating in a bathtub.

### ° The concept of "authentic" through the music

The music of the film is a manipulation of Beethoven's work. Kagel transformed Beethoven's music very effectively: he orchestrated piano works, changed the instrumentation of orchestral tones, or made very unusual performances of them.

His target was, first that the music should sound as Beethoven would still hear it in 1826: pretty badly+ (from the film script, N. Stavlas, 2012 p.62) Kagel argues that the idea was to orchestrate his [Beethoven's] music in such a way that certain sound ranges and frequencies that a deaf person hears distorted or not at all would be treated accordingly+(Kagel: 1975, N. Stavlas, 2012 p. 62). It shows Kagel's scepticism towards the concept of "authentic" performance.

Secondly, by using contemporary studio techniques as well as by making a collage out of Beethoven's music, he illustrates his point that the music from the past should also be performed as music of the present+(Kagel:1970, N.

Stavlas 2012, p. 62). Kagel allows himself to transform and to use Beethoven's music in unorthodox ways, against the conventions. Our Western musical tradition, as it is explained in the first part (part I.3.) advocates a strict fidelity to the written work thought as a sacred text.

### **3.3. Ludwig Van.(1969-1970) Homage by Beethoven: a scenic work**

#### **° Presentation**

The piece is intended for live performance and its score is derived from the film *Ludwig Van* itself. The whole score consists of photographs of the walls and of the furniture from the music room that Kagel constructed for the purposes of the film.

#### **° Another place for performers**

Through its form, a piece aimed for live performance, *Ludwig Van* brings new issues dear to Kagel still related to the German tradition.

The conventional relationships between performers and composers and the place for interpret in the process of creation are re-invented. The composer doesn't want to set any limits on the performers' creativity. The score provides the performer with a long list of instructions but most of them are about what the performers are *allowed* to do, rather than what they *have* to do or what they are *forbidden* to do: the sequence of pages is ad libitum, each page can be seen both as a musical piece in its own right and as part of a larger composition, players can play from the same or from different pages at any time, not all notes on a page have to be played anything can be repeated and each of the four edges of the page can be the bottom edge.ö (N. Stavlas, 2012 p. 97) That's why the result will sound depending on the way musicians decided to build it, %Kagel did not make the decisions himself+(N. Stavlas, 2012 p.97). It seems that a new freedom and "responsibility" are given to the musicians. Simultaneously the mode Kagel transforms and manipulates Beethoven's works brings about the topic of authorship. The title of the piece presents Beethoven's

music, audiences are expecting to hear his pieces. But the way it is performed is unusual and many would argue that[...] it is disrespectful towards the composer. (N. Stavlas, 2012 p.63)

I believe, the music cannot be attributed to one author, on the contrary it belongs to Beethoven, to Kagel and to the performers and it appears as a common and shared process of creation. That was the purpose of Kagel, he questions the conventional separations and specializations among the functions of composer and interpreters, audiences and performers.

### ° Beethoven's music today

Kagel interrogates the gaps between contemporary circles and the classics. He wishes to make audiences aware of Beethoven's modernity. (E. Schwartz and D. Godfrey, 1993 p.244) In parallel he wants interpreters to think and play Beethoven as new music. Himself he tells how *Ludwig Van* seeks to say to the interpreter that "music of the past should also be performed as music of the present" (Kagel: 1970) . It reveals strongly Kagel's thinking, his respect for the music coming from the past but also his criticism about this mythological past created in order to fill needs of present day people (part I .3. 2.)

Alexandre Tharaud a French pianist who recorded *Ludwig Van* wrote: "performing Beethoven's music as he (mis)heard it makes authenticity turn against itself, and provides an acid counter-argument to a more orthodox homage, protesting against listening to Beethoven and performing his work without any critical or reflective thought. In a way, Kagel's versions of Beethoven's music claim to be even more authentic, closer to Beethoven himself, than performances that are generally regarded as faithful to the text." (Tharaud, in the booklet for CD Kagel, 2003).



## CONCLUSION

This thesis was an attempt to introduce, first of all, the music performance in its totality including its visual side, side too often avoid. Christopher Small in his book *Musicking* discuss deeply about the traditional approaches of music and their meanings. It was a great help for my analyses and understandings and he steered me to purchase further my reflection.

The first part pointed out how the ceremony of a classical concert is ~~orchestrated~~, in fact every small details has its importance and its meaning. While observing this event I highlighted its canons and conventions. It's a world which present music as a serious matter, audience and performers are not invited to communicate between each other and nowadays functions and professions are getting more and more specialized. The end of this first section exposed the peculiar relationships to the past maintain in the Western classical tradition. All the composers played at the present time are dead composers and belong all to a period of 150 years. Actually the Western society created a mythological past.

In the course of the second part, around the figure of Mauricio Kagel and his eclecticism I brought out how the composer where constantly questioning the conventions and creating new forms. He protests against the sclerosis and seeks to think the representation of music directing his own musical work on the stage. Kagel and his life, Kagel as a composer, director and film-maker gave me the possibility to present an artist, thinking and questioning the Classical Music World but also the society and creating his profession. He didn't accept the common Western modes of classification. I defined the genre ~~Instrumental theatre~~, a space where Kagel experimented his views based mostly on Björn

Heile written text. How Mauricio Kagel was combining visual and acoustic components on the stage.

Thanks to the analysis of the movie and scenic work *Ludwig Van* and the considerable dissertation of N. Stavlas I exposed the main ideas developed in Kagel's work based on the German tradition. He criticizes the %authenticity movement+growing in the Western tradition and looks for a different approach which gives back a form of modernity to musical works from the past.

What I wish to underline is a lack of reflection within the classical musical sphere including the concert events but also the institutions. Musicians, audiences, schools... perpetuate a tradition without knowing even themselves its meanings, that preservation happens mostly unconsciously. Even more, those behaviours are not exclusive to the music domain; we find them again inside the whole society. I could imagine another type of institutions, where the modes of performing would be thought as an ensemble. We should allow ourselves to re-invent the different classification, open and create bridges between artistic disciplines and among worlds commonly separate; to think the achievement of the person in its singularity and not to reduce the individual into one unique function.

## SOURCES

Cité de la musique ressources en ligne. 2005: *Kagel et le Romantisme*.  
<http://mediatheque.citedelamusique.fr> website consulted 25/03/2013

Sous la direction de Laurent Feneyrou. 2003. *Musique et Dramaturgie: Esthétique de la représentation au 20ème siècle*. Publications de la Sorbonne. Paris.

Sous la direction de G. Ferrari. 2012. *La Musique et la Scène: L'écriture musicale et son expression scénique au 20ème siècle*. Université Paris 8.

Ressources.ircam, BRAHMS base de documentation sur la musique contemporaine. 2008 : <http://brahms.ircam.fr/mauricio-kagel> website consulted 27/03/2013

E.Schwartz and D. Godfrey. 1993. *Music since 1945: Issues, Materials, and Literature*. Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Christopher Small. 1998. *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. Hannover: University Press of New England.

N.Stavlas. 2012. Thesis. *Reconstructing Beethoven: Mauricio Kagel's Ludwig Van*. Goldsmiths, University of London.

## APPENDIX 1.

### PERFORMANCE SAANKO LUVAN?

The performance: *Saanko Luvan?* (Shall we?): 13-14-15 of June 2012  
Naruteatteri: a visual and sound theatre show.

With Perrine Ferrafiat, a puppetry student from Turku Arts Academy, during 2011/2012 we started an artistic collaboration. We now have a company: *Théâtre Mouffles*.

Firstly in august 2011 we began a working and rehearsing time, trying to find materials, sounds, music and images on the stage and to find interactions between our two disciplines. As two French students we decided to create a show on our impressions of Finland. All the year we continued our work and little by little we built one show. The première was in June 2012 and below is the text of presentation:

+Perrine Ferrafiat and Cécile Thévenot came to Finland with postcards stereotypes in mind: all blond Scandinavians, red wooden houses by the lakes, reindeers, children driving huskies, sauna, Santa Clauses, forests...;This is partly true. It's mostly wrong. They Wanted to share their impressions about Finland, and to understand why this culture fascinates them so much. Why they feel it so beautiful and touching when there seems to be nothing happening.

Perrine Ferrafiat objective puppeteer and Cécile Thévenot prepared pianist, share their Finnish impressions. They invent on the stage a language capable of re-telling their Finland. A language where the visual and the sound worlds interact without illustrating each other, a language that suggests and translates a land poorly known. The audience is invited to follow rustling animation, between poetry and absurd.+